

*MOTHER-KIN AND MOTHER-
GODDESSES* BOOK in

Parallel
between
the
Pelew
Islands
of
to-day
and the
religious
and
social
state of
Western
Asia and
Egypt in
antiquity.

they personate is also the political head of the land ; and in that case his inspired priest, however humble his origin, ranks as a spiritual king and rules over all the chiefs. Indeed we are told that, with the physical and intellectual decay of the race, the power of the priests is more and more in the ascendant and threatens, if unchecked, to develop before long; into an absolute theocracy which will swallow up every other form of government¹

Thus the present, or at least the recent, state of society and religion in the Pelew Islands presents some interesting parallels to the social and religious condition of Western Asia and Egypt. In early days, if the conclusions reached in this work are correct. In both regions we see a society based on mother-kin developing a religion in which goddesses of the clan originally occupied the foremost place, though in later times, as the clans coalesced into states, the old goddesses have been rivalled and to some extent supplanted by the new male gods of the enlarged pantheon. But in the religion of the Pelew Islanders, as in that of the Khasis and the ancient Egyptians, the balance of power has never wholly shifted from the female to the male line, because society has never passed from mother-kin to father-kin. And in the Pelew Islands as in the ancient East we see the tide of political power running strongly in the

directi of men who claimed to rule them In the name
on of of the gods. In the Pelew Islands such men
theoc might have
racy, developed into divine kings like those of Babylon
the and Egypt,
peopl if the natural course of evolution had not
e been cut short
resign by the intervention of Europe.²
ing The evidence of the Khasis and the Pelew
the Islanders, two
condu peoples very remote and very different from
ct of each other,
affair suffices to prove that the Influence which
s into mother-kin
the may exert on religion Is real and deep. But
hands In order

¹ J. Kubary, "Die Religion der
Pelauer," In A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus
Volks- und Menschenkunde*, i. 30-35.
The author wrote thus in the
year
1883, and his account of the Pelew
religion was published in iSSS. Com-
pare his work *Die socialen
Einrich-*

tungen der Pelauer', p. Si. Great
changes have probably taken place
in
the islands since Kubary wrote.

² For some other parallels
between
the state of society and religion in
these two regions, see Note IV. at
the
end of the volume.